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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 000319

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [KTIA](#) [ST](#) [XL](#)  
SUBJECT: FURTHER POLITICAL SHAKE-UP IN ST. LUCIA

REF: A. 07 BRIDGETOWN 525  
[1](#)B. 07 BRIDGETOWN 49

Classified By: PolOff Tyler T. Allen for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Three members of parliament in St. Lucia are threatening to leave the ruling United Workers Party if their demands, which include the dismissal of a competent, but disliked, appointed member of cabinet and the reinstatement of a politically unpopular figure, are not met. If they walk, it would be enough to topple the current government in St. Lucia. The dismantling of the current, generally pro-U.S. government could slow various political and commercial initiatives in which the USG has an interest. END SUMMARY.

STUCK IN A CATCH-22  
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[1](#)2. (C) Former Foreign Minister Rufus Bousquet, current Housing Minister Richard Frederick, and Deputy Speaker of the House Marcus Nicholas are threatening to leave the UWP if Bousquet is not returned to Cabinet. Since June 6, when then-Prime Minister Sir John Compton fired Bousquet for organizing a cabinet coup against him (ref A), Bousquet has made a number of unsuccessful attempts to be reinstated. This time, however, he and his cronies have been more vocal against current Prime Minister Stephenson King, lending credence to rumors that they will declare party independence if their demands are not met -- a move that would cripple the ruling party. One minister told PolOff privately that it appears King will have to concede to Bousquet given the numbers involved.

[1](#)3. (C) Jeannine Compton-Rambally, daughter of Sir John Compton and a popular political figure in her own right, further complicated the situation by publicly threatening to leave the ruling party if Bousquet returns to Cabinet. Compton-Rambally also has the backing of the nationally-adored widow, Lady Janice Compton. Ken Monplaisir, a prominent lawyer and close friend to the Comptons, confided that the Comptons are still offended over Bousquet's earlier actions against Sir John and believe he has damaged the party. Consequently, both Jeannine and Lady Janice would wash their hands of the party if Bousquet is reinstated. Given the role Sir John's stature still plays in the UWP, abandonment by his wife and daughter could irrevocably damage the party. Monplaisir projected that such a move could cause the government to gradually implode and force a return to the polls within the next two years.

[1](#)4. (C) Further complicating the situation is the renegade trio's demand to have Minister for Economic Planning Ausbert d'Auvergne removed from Cabinet. According to various

contacts, d'Auvergne is hated for his arrogance and autocratic style. Fellow Cabinet members allegedly resent the power he wields, power derived from his control over the budget and economic planning, and the high level of trust both Compton and King have had in him. They particularly resent his clout given that he is a nonelected, political-appointee minister. However, d'Auvergne is recognized throughout St. Lucia as one of the most capable members of government and a vital cog if government hopes to successfully develop economically. As such, a potential compromise would be the Prime Minister removing d'Auvergne from Cabinet, but then hiring him back as a consultant.

#### ANOTHER SOLUTION?

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15. (C) D'Auvergne told PolOff that the Prime Minister is the real target. According to d'Auvergne, Bousquet and company recognize that d'Auvergne is a great strength to King, and that by ridding the Cabinet of him, along with reinstating Bousquet, they would be able to weaken King and increase their own power within the party. However, d'Auvergne explained that King has an alternate strategy that would keep d'Auvergne in and Bousquet out, but that King needs some time to implement this strategy. On May 14, the day following an alleged meeting in which the party met and discussed various compromises, King left St. Lucia on official business, not to return until May 18. Political observers in St. Lucia are awaiting an announcement concerning Bousquet's and Frederick's demands that week.

#### COMMENT: THE EFFECT ON U.S. PRIORITIES

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16. (C) Unless King can impose much better party discipline, the UWP will face difficulties for the rest of its administration -- which could be as short as a few months if those threatening to leave the party follow through, or a couple of years as the party slowly implodes. As the last 15 months have illustrated, political instability equals little policy progression in the UWP government. Unfortunately, this has not played well for U.S. priorities in St. Lucia. Post is moving towards signing an Article 98 agreement with St. Lucia and is pushing a renewal of the Status of Forces Agreement. Progress has been slow; despite assurances that the Cabinet has agreed in principle to the Article 98 Agreement, we have been told it now requires a legal scrub from the Attorney General (whose technical work is undoubtedly hindered by the need to address party politics). The current UWP administration is pursuing a bold development package that involves considerable investment from various U.S. companies, but again this has been slow to get off the ground despite best intentions, in part due to energy wasted on party squabbles. Since the development projects are tied closely to two UWP ministers with the ability and initiative to seek out investors, there is little confidence that such plans would continue under a SLP government.

#### COMMENT CONTINUED: A NOTE ON FREDERICK

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17. (C) Richard Frederick's participation in this ploy against his own party leadership is the most recent illustration of his waning political clout. The alleged money launderer and defender of narco-traffickers (ref B) took a surprising blow when he came in a distant fourth out of four in the race for the two UWP deputy political leader spots on March 30. While his charisma and cash were once seen as necessary infusions for the UWP, his fourth place finish was a clear statement by the party that it is ready to move away from Frederick's role as a UWP poster child. Reasons for this range from fear of his ties to drugs and gangs to corruption and cronyism in the running of his current ministry. Recognizing this loss in stature, Frederick has likely joined with Bousquet in hopes of leveraging their way back to positions of influence within the party.

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